

IN THE UNITED STATES DESIGNATED OFFICE (DO/US)

In re: Laurent Benbadis et al. Attn: DO/US  
International Appl. No.: PCT/FR99/01165  
International Filing Date: May 17, 1999  
For: MUTANT LACTOBACILLUS BULGARICUS  
STRAINS FREE FROM BETA-GALACTOSIDE  
ACTIVITY

November 17, 2000

Box PCT  
Assistant Commissioner of Patents  
Washington, DC 20231

**PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT**

Sir:

Please amend the above-identified application as follows:

In The Abstract:

Please add the following as page 16 of the application:

**ABSTRACT**

The invention concerns mutant *L. bulgaricus* strains bearing a nonsense mutation, in at least one of the sequences coding for the lactose operon, and free from  $\beta$ -galactosidase activity, and lactic starters comprising said strains. Said strains and starters can be used to obtain fermented milk products from glucose-added milk.

In The Claims:

Claim 3, line 2, please delete "either of claims 1 and 2" and substitute --claim 1--.

Claim 4, line 3, please delete "any one of claims 1 to 3" and substitute --claim 1--.

Claim 6, line 5, please delete "any one of claims 1 to 3" and substitute --claim 1--.

Claim 8, lines 1 and 2, please delete "either of claims 6 and 7" and substitute --claim 6 --.

Claim 9, line 2, please delete "any one of claims 6 to 8" and substitute --claim 6--.